2: Barrett E-5 (no date) 1917 NT20 Washo NT20

INTRODUCTION.

The Washo Indians constitute a small group forming a distinct linguistic family and occupying a very small territory in the Sierra Nevada, bordering Lake Tahoe, and on the upper courses of the Carson and Truckee rivers.

While prosecuting field work for the Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee, in the adjacent Paiute region of Nevada, for the special purpose of building one of its series of life-sized, groups representing the aboriginal culture areas of America, and of assembling a general collection illustrative of the Great Basin* region, an opportunity presented itself to pay a short visit to the Washo at Woodfords, California; Gardnerville and Carson City, Nevada; and on Lake Tahoe. The few days available were, of course, entirely inadequate for a thorough study of this interesting people, and therefore the information here presented is offered simply as a sketch of Washo culture with particular reference to its relation to the cultures of the two great adjacent areas: the Great Basin area on the east, and the California area on the west.

Culturally this tribe forms what might be termed a buffer between these two great western culture areas. Its situation,

*The term Great Basin as here used refers to the Great Basin region lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, and comprising roughly the states of Utah and Nevada. For purposes of ethnography the term should be made to extend somewhat farther south and should include a small portion of the northern plateau region; i. e., that part lying north of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, and occupied by the Paiute now living on the Moapa, Shivwits, and Kaibab reservations and vicinity.

The term Plateau culture area has been hitherto applied to this region, but in view of the fact that the term is, from a standpoint of physiography, a misnomer, and that the term Great Basin, is generally accepted as the name for this physiographic division of the continent, it seems best to adopt it for anthropology as well. Especially is this advisable since the name is so perfectly descriptive of this region and since the cultural limits of its inhabitants so closely approximate the limits of the Great Basin area when considered from a physiographic standpoint.

The accepted names of other areas of North America are generally applicable both to the physiography and the culture of the areas involved, as the Plains area, Arctic area, etc. Consequently the name Great Basin area appears equally appropriate when applied to this circumscribed region, with its great number of small, disconnected sinks and saline lakes extending from the Wasatch range on the east to the Sierra Nevada on the west, and embracing such saline bodies as the Great Salt Lake, Pyramid Lake, Lake Winnemucca, and Walker Lake, which are simply remnants of the great quaternary lakes Bonneville and Lahontan, that formerly covered much of the Great Basin.

stick of gum to pieces of yard goods and a loaf of bread. If the family were well-to-do, they bought the gifts themselves. (Teena's family bought $75.00 worth of gifts.) If the family were poor, others would help them buy gifts. After this Teena ran to the nearest water and bathed the paint from her body. The nearest water was the Carson River, about three-quarters of a mile away. She went into the water wearing only the brassiere and breechcloth, though it was the middle of winter and cold.

The territory of the Washo Indians lies almost entirely on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada mountains, and extends out into the semi-arid eastern foothills, partly in the State of California and partly in Nevada. Lake Tahoe, which is on the borderline between the two States, is the center of the area.

S. A. Barrett[1] states that the Washo Indians form either an aberrant Hokan group or a distinct linguistic family with cultural relationships to the California tribes Maidu and Miwok to the west, and the Great Basin Shoshonean tribes Paiute and Shoshone to the east. The relationship to the California area tribes appears in the use of the conical slab-dwelling and semi-subterranean ceremonial house; in the bowlder mortar, cobblestone pestle, and soap-root cereal brush; and in the use of acorn as a food. The relationship is also evident in the prominence of certain types of fine, coiled basketry and in a considerable number of geometric patterns bearing descriptive names. The similarities to the tribes of the Great Basin region to the east are shown by identical foods and in the similar methods employed in securing these foods, especially in that certain nets are used in fishing and rabbit-hunting and that similar methods are employed in handling the *pinon* nut and other vegetable foods. The twined basketry resembles very closely that of the Great Basin cultures, and certain stone implements are also very similar. Barrett also says that the Washo are more closely allied to the Great Basin area than to the California area. He does not mention the puberty ceremony in his publication.

A. L. Kroeber[2] states that the puberty dance for girls was practiced, perhaps in a Shoshonean game, since neither the valley Maidu, the hill Miwok, nor the Yokuts give this dance in developed form.

Robert H. Lowie[3] reports that the most important dance was the girls' puberty ceremony, and he says it was still common in the Carson Valley. According to one of his informants, named Jack, 'A girl menstruating for the first time always informs her mother. She is laid on the warm ashes put into a pit, but is allowed to sleep inside the hut. She fasts for four days, but drinks an infusion of sugar-pine leaves. Men must not touch her clothes, or approach her before the puberty dance, lest deer and antelope run away. The fast makes her live longer and keeps her from getting hungry in later life. If she ate, she would die young and would neither grow properly nor get along well. After the four-day period, the father goes around summoning people, who gather for the dance. Weak from fasting, the girl supports herself with a stick . . . about seven feet high, which is planted into the ground. Its wood is light, and the adolescent's mother has painted it red all over. This pole will aid the girl in later life.

'After the ceremony her father takes it far up into the hills, where he plants it in a hole in a rock; and when she is somewhat older her legs will not weaken in climbing a mountain. Henceforth the stick is not touched. Men and women both dance, always at night, and on the fourth night until morning. An attendant dances with the adolescent to support her because of her weakness. A giving away of presents . . . takes place in the girl's honour; various relatives, dancing in the center of the space, give away money, people being free to come for five or ten cents from the hands of the mother or other kinsfolk. Fires are kept up outside the ring of dancers, who form a closed circle, singing at the same time. The song leader was com-

5:Kroeber E-5 (no date) 1925 NT20 Washo NT20

CHAPTER 38.

THE WASHO.

Affiliations, 569; habitat, 569; numbers, 570; culture, 571; basketry, 571; dress and implements, 572; buildings, 572; religion and society, 573.

AFFILIATIONS.

The Washo have been unduly neglected by students of the Indian. What little is on record concerning them makes it difficult to place them.

Their speech, which is rather easy to an English tongue and pleasant to the ear, is distinctive and very diverse from that of the Shoshonean Mono and Northern Paiute with whom they are in contact and association. Such investigation as has been made—and it has not gone very deep—points to the Washo language as being Hokan and therefore no longer to be regarded as an independent stock. Still the affiliation with other Hokan languages can not be close. The position of the Washo makes this comparative distinctness remarkable. For a detached and quasi-independent little group the Washo are on the wrong side of the Sierra. Diversity is the true Californian habit. The moment the Plateau is entered single dialects stretch for monotonous hundreds of miles, and the basic Shoshonean tongue continues without interruption across the Great Basin and even over the Rockies. Now the Washo are a Basin tribe. Their settlements were all on streams that flow eastward to be lost in the interior desert. Even as the artificial lines of statehood run they are as much a Nevadan as a Californian people. Their anomaly as a separate fragment is therefore in their location.

It is tempting to conjecture, accordingly, and especially on the basis of their probable Hokan kinship, that they are an ancient Californian tribe, which has gradually drifted, or been pressed, over the Sierra. But there are no concrete grounds other than speech to support such an assumption.

HABITAT.

The Washo territory is the upper and more fertile drainage of the Truckee and Carson Rivers—streams born in California mountains to perish in Nevada sinks. How far down they ranged on these

The skin was tied on a smooth pole when it was scraped. The hide was then tanned with cooked brain and spinal cord which was stored in a piece of intestine. The hide was soaked in the brain for a day or two and then stretched and scraped again. The result was magu tau susi, or tanned deer hide. Antelope skins were prepared in the same way. 281 [415]

Thread came from the sinew (dideu or tashukido, "loin sinew") along the back of the deer. There is a strip of meat on the loin of the deer called dashkapush. This was removed and the sinew was taken off that and separated into strings. 283

Another kind of thread was made from Apocynum cannabinum, locally milkweed or Indian hemp. The fine silk-like fibers of this plant were separated, pulled, and twisted between the palm of the hand and the thigh into a strong twine (dumbaya$gi). It was collected in the fall after the frost came and the outer bark began to fall off. Both the outer and inner bark were used. [824]

Apparently there was little difference in the dress of the men and the women. The women wore a belt (meiliu) with a front and sometimes a back apron (imboshude) attached. The women also used a sagebrush bark napkin for menstruation and wore more jewelry. The men wore a G-string type of breechclout and occasionally a twine net on their heads. Other than these few items, dress, hair style, and ornamentation was essentially the same. 291

The breechclout was gumyoyabuwe while a piece of skin wrapped around the body from the chest to the knees was mangumtash. The latter was formed, according to Hank Pete, by wetting untanned deerhide and wrapping it around a tree to dry. A poncho (damu) with a hole for the head and with or without holes for the arms was made from a single deer skin. This simple dress sometimes had flaps that hung down over the upper arms made from the leg skin of the deer. Lower leg pants (p$kishu wigas) were made from an untanned deer hide, sewn of the skin of a fur animal, or of a wrapping of sagebrush bark and covered the lower leg from the ankle to the knee to keep one from being scratched by brush. [192]

Everyone went barefoot most of the time, but moccasins (moko, the No. Paiute use a similiar word) were used. The most common moccasin was a single piece of untanned deerskin with a seam on the outer side of the foot and up the heel to the ankle. A hard sole may be added to the bottom. Another type of moccasin was in two pieces with a hard sole, soft upper part, a seam up the heel, and possible ankle flaps and a tongue added. In cold weather the moccasin was made extra large to allow room for a sock of sagebrush or cedar bark wrapped around the foot. [197] [824]

person never traded a whole deer. This indicates that the hide was about one-third the value of the deer.

Pinenuts were often carried and stored in certain kinds of buckskin bags and willow baskets. A tugabul full of pinenuts in the shell was something of a standard of measurement. The tugabul was a coarse scoop-shaped, open twined tray used for winnowing and roasting. It would hold about five gallons of pinenuts leveled to the rim of the basket.

Another basket used for measuring was the bayudate which was a single rod coiled bowl-shaped basket that varied in capacity from about a pint to two quarts. By converting from tugabul and bayudate to pints, quarts, and gallons it was possible to describe the value of a few objects in terms of volume of pinenuts. The following relationships were estimated by Hank Pete for a period in the middle of winter when food surplus was somewhat low: (1) a magpie tail feather = 1 pint; (2) an obsidian knife = 1 quart; (3) a pair of moccasins, an eagle tail feather, or a tugabul basket = 2 quarts; (4) a sinew backed bow and three arrows with stone points = 4 gallons; (5) an untanned deer skin = 6 gallons; and (6) a tanned deer skin = 7 gallons.

It is assumed that in late winter, when pinenuts were more scarce, this ideal scale of values would shift so that fewer pinenuts were worth more manufactured goods. Considerably more research needs to be done in this regard. The influence of extreme scarcity on the character of economic distributions is a problem that cannot be dealt with here.

The Washo had little trade with non-Washo peoples. Several influences appear to have contributed to this fact. The languages of the surrounding peoples were unintelligible. The Washo lived in a mountainous country where transportation by foot was difficult and occasionally impossible in the winter. They also ranged a large, productive, and diversified environment that supplied almost every kind of good used except ocean shells. A trek from Carson Valley over the Sierra Nevada for acorns (malung) might take them into every kind of vegetation zone and natural habitat in the Sierras. Salt (ungabi)[1] was available in Antelope Valley, obsidian (patsaga) from Mono Lake country, and red ochre (sawasang) from an area south of the present town of Dayton, Nevada. Foods such as pinenuts (tagum), fish (atabi), rabbits (p¢lleu), and deer (m¢mdewi) were plentiful within Washo territory.

1. This word (ungabi) came from the Shoshonean stock of languages so that phonetic variations of it were used by the Northern and Southern Paiute, the Ute, and Shoshoni (Steward 1938, 275-283).

APPENDIX A

LINGUISTIC NOTE AND GLOSSARY

1970

The Washo spoke a Hokan language while the Northern Paiute to the east spoke a Utaztekan language and the Miwok and Maidu to the west spoke Penutian languages. Peoples speaking Hokan languages at initial White contact times were distributed in scattered groups from California through Mexico and into Central America. The glottochronology of Hokan indicates that the Hokan peoples began to split up into these groups about 5,000 years ago (Kroeber 1955).

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The following orthography was used by this writer in recording and is the major one used in this study. Washo words from Lowie (1939) and Jacobsen (personal communication) have been rewritten to conform to the orthography used here.

Consonants	labial	alveolar	frontal	velar	glottal
voiceless stops	p	t		k	?
voiced stops	b	d		g	
voiceless fricatives		s	sh		h
voiced nasals	m	n		ng	
voiced lateral		l			
voiced semivowels	w		y		

Vowels	front unrounded	central unrounded	back rounded
high	i		u
mid-close	e		o
mid-open	¢		
low		a	

Essentially the consonants may be pronounced as in English and the vowels as follows: "i" as in be, "e" as in bay, "¢" as in bed, "a" as in bog, "o" as in boat, and "u" as in boot. The sound "sh" is found in the English word ship, while "ng" occurs in running.

Kroeber (1907) reports no regular system of accenting and uses very few accents even in his phonetic recording.

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Glossary

angale atega	"houses together", a community
atabi	fish
ayas	antelope

7:Freed E-8 (1952-1957)1960 NT30 Washo NT30

[P. 350, A]

I. THE WASHO INDIANS

This chapter is a brief summary of what is known of aboriginal Washo culture, except for social organization, together with the principal changes it has undergone since the coming of the whites. The most significant characteristic of Washo acculturation from the point of view of this study has been the progressive individualization of the society. This can be seen most clearly in their economic life, where the old, cooperative methods of earning a livelihood have given way to individual wage work. The trend toward individualism has also affected ceremonial. The major ceremony of the year, the pine-nut dance, has been given up; and curing is less a group affair than it once was, with the exception of the peyotists, who constitute approximately ten per cent of the tribal membership. Warfare, another activity requiring group cooperation, was abandoned shortly after the coming of the whites. The effects upon social organization of this trend toward individualism will be traced in the following chapters.

INFORMANTS

The sketch of Washo culture which follows is based primarily upon the sources listed below and upon data which I gathered directly in the field. My principal informants were the following: Nancy Emm, Clara Frank, Bertha Holbrook, and Hank Pete, all of Dresslerville, Nevada; Roy James, Woodfords, California; Caesar John, Markleeville, California; and Henry Rupert, Carson City, Nevada.

SOURCES

Ethnographic accounts of the Washo are few. The principal ones are by Barrett (1917), Curtis (1926), and Lowie (1939). Stewart (1944) and Siskin (MS) have contributed two excellent studies of Washo peyotism, and Kroeber (1907) has published a brief sketch of the Washo language, which contains a list of kinship terms. Other major sources are Dangberg's (1927) collection of myths, Kroeber's (1925) brief summary of the then available data on Washo culture, Stewart's (1941) list of cultural elements, and Heizer and Elsasser's (1953) study of the archaeology of the central Sierra Nevada.

LOCATION

The Washo Indians are a small, isolated group who speak a language tentatively placed in the Hokan stock (Sapir, 1929, p. 139). In aboriginal times they occupied the extreme western edge of Nevada and eastern California. The eastern part of their territory lay in the Great Basin and the western part in the Sierra Nevada. Aboriginal Washo territory extended from Honey Lake in the north to Sonora Pass in the south. The eastern boundary ran from Sonora Pass northward along the crest of the Pine Nut Mountains; it then turned west

8: Merriam& d'Azevedo E-4, 5 (1954-1955) 1957
NT20 Washo NT20

Washo Peyote Songs

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I

The Washo

THE Washo people of Nevada and California have been described linguistically as a small Hokan-speaking group among the Shoshonean-speaking peoples of the Great Basin (Kroeber 1907; Lowie 1939). They formerly inhabited a relatively abundant territory extending from Honey Lake in the north to Antelope Valley and Sonora Pass in the south, and from the Pinenut Range east of Carson Valley in Nevada to Lake Tahoe and the summit of the Sierra-Nevada Mountains of California in the west. Present population is variously reported at between 400 and 1000 individuals; the figures on file at the Nevada Indian Agency in Stewart, Nevada, support the larger estimates. The Washo were formerly distributed in small, band-like communities composed of semi-exogamous extended families which made use of the full range of their diversified setting in hunting and gathering, and were thus a highly mobile population. In recent times, however, there has been an increasing tendency to cluster in small colonies in or near the older white settlements of Nevada and California, and on the few remaining allotment acres provided by the government many years ago. The major source of money-income for families is provided by those members who are employed as laborers on road-construction gangs, ranches, and farms. A few women work as servants in the towns and resorts. There is little use of the land for agricultural purposes, while hunting, fishing, and gathering still provide an important part of subsistence. Despite the often drastic conditions of acculturation during the past one hundred years, the Washo have maintained considerable homogeneity as an ethnic and cultural minority.

The Peyotists

Peyotism among the Washo is scarcely more than twenty years old, having been introduced by one Ben Lancaster, a member of the tribe who had learned the ritual and ideology during a long sojourn among eastern and southern tribes. In 1936 he started the proselyting which resulted in the creation of an enthusiastic group of Washo and Paiute adherents during the period 1936–39. By 1940, however, the movement had already become defunct, and meetings were no longer held in Washo territory. Ben Lancaster continued to preside over the embittered and secretive remnants of the cult, which consisted of a handful of loyal Paiute and a very few Washo members. He also erected an

9: d'Azevedo et al. E-4,5 (1952-1961) 1963 NT20 Washo NT20

A RECONSTRUCTION OF ABORIGINAL WASHO SOCIAL ORGANIZATION[1*]

by Stanley A. Freed

The reconstruction of aboriginal Washo social structure presented here is based upon the publications of earlier investigators and upon data that my wife and I collected in the course of about six months' field work in the summers of 1952, 1953, 1956 and the winter of 1956-57. The major sources on aboriginal Washo social organization are: Barrett (1917), Curtis (1926), Kroeber (1907; 1917), Lowie (1939), and Siskin (1941). Our field data consist principally of interviews with 70 informants who ranged in age from 10 to over 80. Genealogical data, kinship terminology, census material, and brief life histories were collected from all informants. The testimony of our older informants regarding aboriginal conditions and the earlier published reports almost always agree, and thereby make possible a reconstruction of aboriginal Washo social organization that is probably relatively sound. The changes in Washo social structure since aboriginal times will be mentioned here, but a discussion of the probable causes of these changes has been omitted because such an analysis has appeared in an earlier paper (Freed, 1960).

In addition to a description of kinship terminology, residence rules, marriage patterns and other customary categories of analysis of social organization, this paper will attempt to describe role behavior among kinsmen in aboriginal times. This description is based on data from role profile tests taken by 47 Washo in the winter of 1956-57, and therefore pertains to modern role behavior (Freed, 1960, 365-70). The degree to which these patterns of modern role behavior resemble those of aboriginal times cannot be determined with any certainty because the published sources contain virtually no information on role behavior; also, attempts to elicit statements of aboriginal role behavior from elderly informants were unproductive. However, it is possible to make a tentative estimate of the degree to which modern and aboriginal role behavior resemble each other on the basis of a general appraisal of Washo acculturation. The Washo are still a recognizable group; they speak their own language; and, in modified form, they practice a number of aboriginal culture patterns (Freed, 1960). For these reasons we can assume that role behavior among the modern Washo gives some indication of aboriginal role behavior.

Kinship Terminology

The kinship terminology of the aboriginal Washo may be established with relative confidence because the terminologies collected by Kroeber (1907; 1917) and Lowie (1939) not only agree closely with each other but also with

*Notes are at ends of papers.

The Washo speak a Hokan language; their neighbors to the east, the Northern Paiute, speak a Utaztekan language; the Maidu and Miwok to the west are Penutian speakers. The Hokan languages are widely scattered from California through Mexico and into Central America, and are considered to be among the oldest languages in California. The lexicostatistics of Hokan indicate that Washo separated from Yana, only 60 mi. northwest of the Washo, 5000 years ago. 197 [174]

Kroeber (1955) wrote that "It is evident that the geographical proximity of Yana and Washo is a secondary and recent affair, and that they have been separated not only for a long period but, probably, by a considerable geographical interval for much of that time. Washo in fact proves to have been split off from every other computed Hokan language for 45C or more." 174

Lamb (1958) shows linguistic evidence for the presence of the Proto-Utaztekan people around the Arizona-Sonora, Mexico, region 5000 years ago. After several splits and migrations within the language family there was a general movement north and eastward by the Shoshonean division about 1000 years ago, a movement that was still in progress 500 years ago. In the 1800's the Shoshoneans were the principal language group present in the Great Basin. Linguistic data suggest, therefore, a pattern of Shoshonean contacts over a long period of time which is important in any interpretation of Washo prehistory.

In contrast to the linguistic differences, the Washo appear to be closely related racially to the surrounding tribes. At least, according to the anthropometric study made by Gifford in 1926, the Washo are included with Northern Paiute, Miwok, and many other groups in his "narrow-nosed subtype" of the "Californian type." This similarity is also suggested by the work on Great Basin population by Kennedy (1959). 144

The Washo are culturally, as well as geographically, between eastern California and Great Basin tribes. Barrett (1917) pointed out Washo relationships on both sides of the Sierra Nevada with Californian affinities indicated by the conical house, bedrock mortar, soaproot brush, coiled basketry with descriptively named geometric patterns, and acorns as a food. Heizer and Elsasser (1953, 4) added language affiliation, looped willow hot rock lifter, and flat mush stirring paddle to this list. 171 [197]

Heizer and Elsasser (1953, 4) state that "affiliations of Washo culture with that of the Shoshonean tribes to the east in the Great Basin proper are: long net for catching rabbits by driving techniques; special 'boss' for rabbit and deer hunt; rabbitskin blanket; heavy dependence for food on nuts of pifion (Pinus monophylla) with the complex of implements and activities used to

been the most important single source of food, providing sustenance through the midwinter months when no other plants were available because it grew in large quantity and could be stored for relatively long periods.

A loosely structured bilateral band of family groups appears to have been the most important unit besides the family itself. The membership within a band was apparently very fluid, since families shifted bands or left the company of other families in the pursuit of food. Communal hunts for antelope or rabbits brought several bands together under the special direction of a shaman or rabbit boss. Exceptionally good gathering conditions also concentrated people, but there appears to have been no tendency for larger groupings of gatherers to involve more than a number of separate bands operating in the same area. This is in part because of the nature of gathering -- as opposed to rabbit or antelope hunting -- where cooperation did not necessarily produce more food. Except for these two situations, supraband organization and leadership appear to have been nonexistent. Within the band, leadership was informal and nonauthoritarian. Tribal identity, except for a broad differentiation between Northern Paiute and other Paiute, Shoshoni, Bannock, and Ute and the Washo, as well as the various neighboring California tribes, appears nonexistent at this time. All the Paiute were never assembled for any enterprise, although bands may have assisted each other in war against some common enemy. There appears, however, to have been no real war among the various Paiute bands. Disputes were settled by arguments, fights and skirmishes in which rocks were thrown (Steward, 1938, 238).

The Aboriginal Situation: Washo

The Washo occupied the area between Lake Tahoe and the Pine Nut Mountains east of Reno. The north-south extent of their territory appears to have been from Honey Lake to Antelope Valley. There is archeological evidence as well as the testimony of informants that Washo territory once extended well into California, perhaps to the edge of the San Joaquin Valley (Heizer and Elsasser, 1953; Kroeber, 1925, 391). Linguistically they represent an isolated fragment of the Hokan stock; the Paiute are part of the great Shoshonean stock of wide distribution in the Basin.

Unfortunately the ethnographic information on the Washo is far less complete than is that on the Paiute. However, there is nothing to suggest, in the information on hand, that the Washo differed markedly from the Paiute in subsistence activities, social organization or culture.

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
Washo NT20 ●

Map. 1. Aboriginal linguistic areas and peyotist villages. Numbers indicate sequence of communities receiving peyote.